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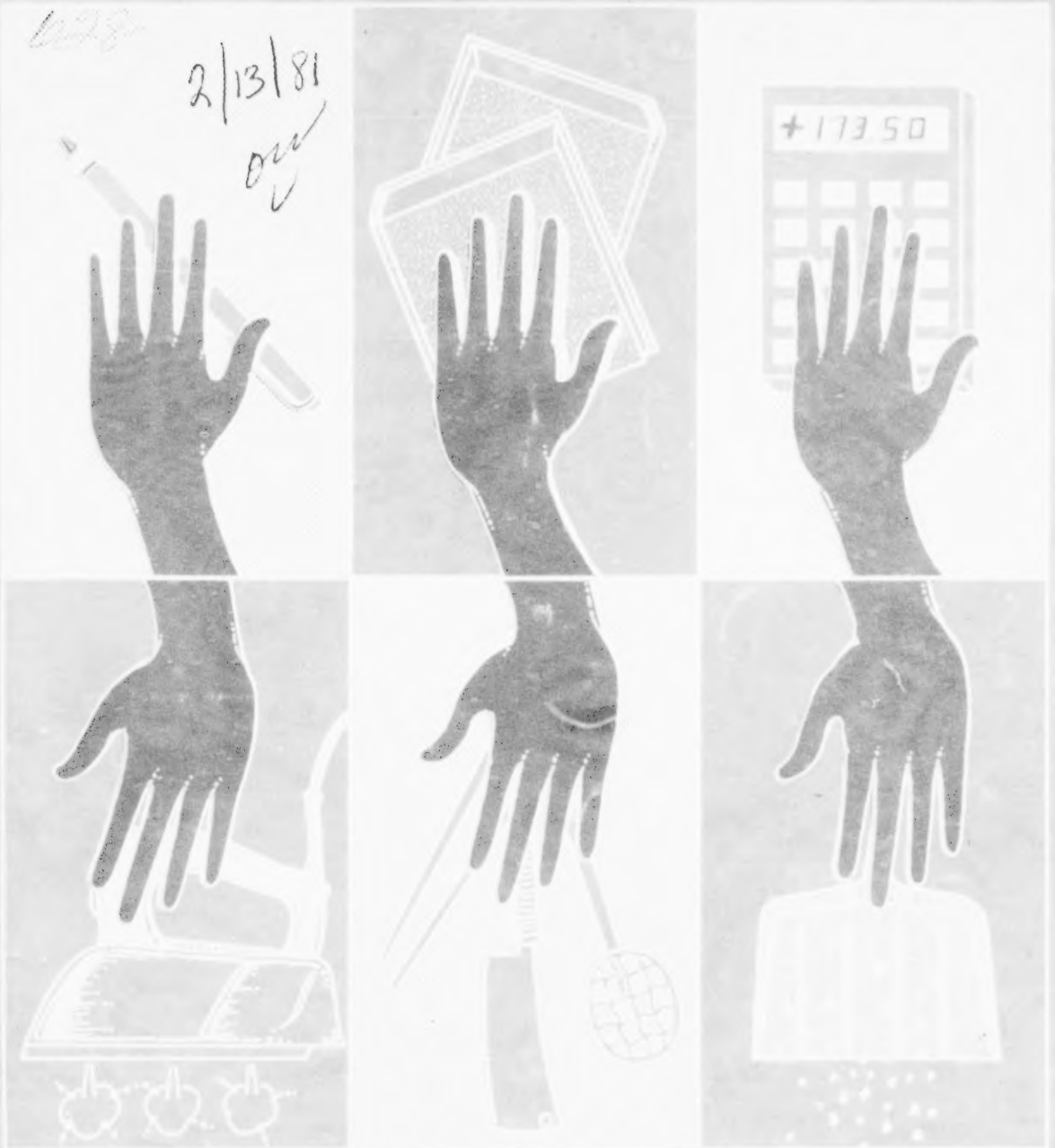
Success of Asian Americans: Fact or Fiction?



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Preface

A portrait of Asian Americans as a successful minority was introduced to the American public in the 1960s. The portrait suggested that although Asian Americans had endured past discrimination, they had succeeded in becoming educationally and economically successful, primarily through their own hard work. This stereotype of success was advanced both in the popular press and in academic journals.[1]

It is a recent idea that Asian Americans are a successful minority. Throughout most of the Nation's history, they have been victims of discriminatory legislation. When people from other countries could obtain American citizenship after living in the United States for 5 years, for example, Asian immigrants were ineligible for citizenship, regardless of how long they had lived here. This was true as recently as 1952 for Korean and Japanese immigrants.[2]

In May 1979 the Commission sponsored a consultation on civil rights issues of Asian and Pacific Americans. This report results in part from that consultation. It also reviews the "success" literature and recent studies on the economic status of Asian Americans.[3] It examines the stereotype of success and presents a picture of the educational, economic, and occupational status of Asian Americans.

[1] See chapter 1 for a review of this literature.
[2] Chin Kim and Bok-Lim C. Kim, "Asian Immigrants in American Law: A Look at the Past and the Challenge Which Remains," *American University Law Review*, vol. 26 (1977), p. 390.
[3] As discussed in chapter 2, there is little data available on Pacific Americans. As a consequence, this monograph focuses on Asian Americans.

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Chapter 1

The Stereotype of Success

The idea that Asian Americans are economically successful has permeated popular and social science literature for some time. This literature holds that Asian Americans are well educated, that they are disproportionately represented in professional and technical positions, and that they are earning salaries equal to or even higher than majority Americans.[1]

The origins of this view in the popular press may be traced to several articles that appeared in the mid-1960s. In 1966 two influential publications presented the American public with a picture of Asian Americans as economically successful.

First, the *New York Times* printed an essay by sociologist William Petersen, "Success Story, Japanese American Style," in which the author stated that Japanese Americans were better off than any other group in the Nation, including whites. To support this contention, Petersen cited several facts, including their higher level of educational attainment in 1960 (12.2 years for Japanese Americans compared with 11.0 years for whites),[2] and at the same time their higher occupational attainment, with 56 percent of Japanese Americans in white-collar jobs compared with 42.1 percent of whites.[3] Petersen only briefly noted that, despite their higher educational attainment, Japanese Americans earned less than whites with comparable education.[4]

In the same year, *U.S. News and World Report* carried a feature article, "Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.," which said that the Nation's 30,000 Chinese Americans were achieving substantial economic success "by dint of. . .hard work."[5] They also were portrayed as an industrious and uncomplaining group. Although the data on which the article was based concerned only Chinese Americans, the article concluded that all Asian Americans were hardworking and, as a result, economically successful.[6]

Such a portrait has remained in active circulation. In 1971 *Newsweek* carried an article, "Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites," which observed that by most conventional measures of success, Japanese Americans were more successful than majority Americans.[7] Japanese Americans, it was reported, were frequently entering such "status" professions as medicine, engineering, architecture, and teaching.[8]

Throughout the 1970s, the popular press continued to apply a modern Horatio Alger image to Asian Americans, especially to Japanese Americans. Upbeat headlines conveyed the image of economic well-being: "The [Americans of Japanese Ancestry]: Fast Rising Sons";[9] "Japanese in U.S. Outdo Horatio Alger";[10] "Korean Americans: In Pursuit of Economic Success."[11] Each story contained a common theme—that Asian Americans presented a model of diligence and success for other Americans to emulate.

This popular portrayal appears to have its base in social science literature. In the mid-1960s, several social scientists analyzed data contained in the 1960

[1] The term "majority Americans" refers to non-Hispanic whites.
[2] William Petersen, "Success Story, Japanese American Style," *New York Times Magazine*, Jan. 9, 1966, p. 38.
[3] Ibid., p. 40.
[4] Ibid.
[5] "Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.," *U.S. News and World Report*, Dec. 26, 1966, p. 73.
[6] Ibid., p. 76.
[7] "Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites," *Newsweek*, June 21, 1971, p. 24.
[8] Ibid., p. 24.
[9] "The A.J.As.: Fast Rising Sons," *Time*, Oct. 25, 1975, p. 26.
[10] "Japanese in U.S. Outdo Horatio Alger," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 17, 1977, p. I-1.
[11] "Korean Americans: In Pursuit of Economic Success," *Washington Post*, July 13, 1978, p. Md. 1.

census and concluded that Asian Americans had attained a high level of economic well-being.

In one of the earliest of these studies, sociologists Calvin Schmid and Charles Nobbe examined education, occupation, and income of nonwhites and compared them with their white counterparts. Based on an analysis of trends over the period 1940 to 1960, they concluded that on all measures of education, Japanese Americans ranked higher than whites. Moreover, the proportions of Japanese Americans in high-paying occupations were higher than the proportions of whites in those occupations.[12] Schmid and Nobbe noted that Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans also had relatively low incomes compared with whites, but beyond suggesting that they were possible victims of discrimination, Schmid and Nobbe did not examine this situation.[13] Instead, they presented to the reader an impression of prosperity: better education and upward occupational mobility.[14]

Other social scientists continued to present data showing that Asian Americans had high levels of education and were often in well-paying occupational categories. For instance, in 1967 demographer Barbara Varon, of the University of Pennsylvania, used census data to compare Asian Americans with their white counterparts, examining educational attainment and occupational status. She reported that Japanese Americans had more education than whites and that the difference was increasing in their favor.[15] She also found that the proportion of Japanese Americans in white-collar occupations increased substantially between 1950 and 1960 while the proportion in service industries declined.[16]

A number of researchers used 1970 census data when they became available and published pieces that continued to stress the theme of success. The articles concentrated on the fact that Asian Americans had more education than majority Americans and that they were more frequently found in professional and technical positions. According to Harry Kitano, a sociologist of Japanese ancestry, "Common measures of success find the Japanese on the 'right' side of the ledger. Both their income and educational levels are high."[17] This view of success appears firmly entrenched in most social science articles concerning Asian Americans.

[12] Calvin F. Schmid and Charles E. Nobbe, "Socioeconomic Differentials Among Nonwhite Races," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 30 (1965), fig. 5, p. 915.
[13] Ibid.,
[14] Ibid., p. 921.

[15] Barbara F. Varon, "The Japanese Americans: Comparative Occupational Status, 1960 and 1950," *Demography*, vol. 3 (1967), p. 811.
[16] Ibid., p. 813.
[17] Harry Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), p. 1.

Chapter 2

From Stereotype to Reality

Asian Americans have often been described as a "successful" minority. The purpose of this chapter is to examine their economic status to determine whether the stereotype of "success" has its basis in fact. The education, occupations, and income of Asian Americans are analyzed to determine the extent to which they have attained high levels of education and whether their occupations are similar to those of majority Americans with the same education. Much of the data to be analyzed comes from the 1970 census of the population.[1] Several studies of national data are also discussed.

For the purposes of this report, the term "Asian Americans" includes peoples from the East Asian nations of Japan, China, Korea, and the Philippines. In 1970, these groups totaled over 1-1/2 million citizens.[2] Where available, data on Hawaiians are also presented. Comprehensive data are not available on the status of other Asian or Pacific Island groups in the United States.[3]

Education

Much of the literature has focused on the relatively high levels of education among some Asian Americans. The 1970 census contains several different measures of education. Some measures indicate that many Asian Americans are doing quite well, but other measures show that their educational attainment is not uniformly high.

In 1970, the median number of years of school completed by majority Americans was 12.1 years.[4] With the exception of Filipino males, this figure was equaled or exceeded by the five groups of Asian Americans for whom data are available. (These data are shown in table 2.1.) The proportion of Asian Americans who were college graduates also exceeded the proportion among majority Americans. In 1970, 13.5 percent of majority males in the United States had at least 4 years of college,[5] but 19 percent of Japanese American males,[6] 25 percent of Chinese American males,[7] and 15 percent of Filipino American males[8] had a college education. The proportion of Asian American females with a college education was also high. In the United States in 1970, 8.1

[1] Census data were collected in 1970, and the volume containing the data on Asian Americans was released in 1973. Data on Asian Americans from the 1980 census are expected in 1983; the 1970 census, therefore, remains the most recent source of national data. The analysis in this chapter will provide a reference point for comparison with the 1980 census data when they become available.

[2] The 1970 census questionnaire included Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, and Korean, as well as an "Other" category. As a result, most Pacific Island Americans and other Asian American groups not listed on the questionnaire were not counted separately. The 1980 census, by contrast, includes Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Hawaiian, Guamanian, and Samoan.

[3] The large number of recent immigrants from Asia are not reported in these 1970 census data, of course, because they arrived after 1970. For instance, 761,691 persons from Asia and the Pacific Islands were admitted to this Nation as immigrants between 1970 and 1976, which increased the population of Asian Americans by about 50 percent. Between May 1975 and December 1977, 148,355 Indochinese refugees immigrated, and there are no data currently available on these groups of new citizens. U.S., Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1976 Annual Report* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976), table 14; and Darrel Montero, *Vietnamese Americans* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979), table 1.1, p. 3.

[4] U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population: United States Summary* (1970), vol. II, table 88 (hereafter cited as *U.S. Summary).*

[5] Ibid.

[6] U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports: Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States,* PC(2)-1G (1973), table 5 (hereafter cited as *Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos).*

[7] Ibid., table 20.

[8] Ibid., table 35.

percent of majority females had at least 4 years of college,[9] but 11 percent of Japanese American females,[10] 17 percent of Chinese American females,[11] and 27 percent of Filipino American females had that much education.[12] The proportion of Filipino American females with 4 years of college, in fact, was the highest proportion of any group, male or female. Compared to the majority population, therefore, the average level of education among these Asian Americans was high.

Comparable data for other Asian groups are not available, but limited data show that some groups are also well-educated. For example, the 1970 census contains a small amount of information on Korean Americans which shows that over one-third (36.2 percent) of all Korean Americans[13] have completed at least 4 years of college. (Data are not available for males and females separately.) In addition, a study of over 3,000 recent immigrants from Vietnam, by Darrel Montero of the Arizona State University School of Social Work, found that many were well-educated; about one-fourth (24.4 percent) of the males and 12.0 percent of the females had a university education prior to emigrating from Vietnam.[14] On the other hand, the 1970 census reported that only 5.6 percent of Hawaiians had completed college.[15]

The census also contains information on the percentage of the adult population with fewer than 5 years of education. People with this level of education are usually considered illiterate,[16] and they are clearly at a disadvantage when seeking employment. Among majority Americans, 4.8 percent of the males[17] and 4.1 percent of the females[18] had fewer than 5 years of schooling. This proportion was exceeded by all five groups of Asian Americans except Japanese Americans.[19] These data are shown in table 2.2. Among Filipino American males the proportion of the population who had fewer than 5 years of education was more than three times the proportion of majority Americans.

These data show a mixed picture of the educational attainment of Asian Americans. Relatively large numbers have attained more years of education than majority Americans, but there are disproportionately large numbers of some groups who have almost no formal education.

Occupation

Data on occupational categories from the 1970 census show that many Asian Americans are in high-paying occupational categories—a fact stressed by the success literature—but a disproportionately large number are also in low-paying occupations.

The proportion of Asian Americans in the professional and technical occupations, one of the two high-paying occupational categories, is large compared with majority Americans. This difference is pronounced in the case of Chinese American males and Filipino American females, who are in professional and technical positions at a rate more than double that of the majority population,[20] as shown in figure 2.1.

On the other hand, their proportion in the other high-paying category, managers and administrators, is not high compared with majority Americans. (These data are shown in figure 2.2.) Although Chinese American and Japanese American males in 1970 were in managerial and administrative positions as often as majority Americans, Filipino Americans were not.[21] Almost 12 percent (11.7 percent) of majority Americans were in this occupational category.[22] This is approximately the same percentage as among Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans, but only 3.1 percent of Filipino American males[23] and 1.7 percent of Filipino American females[24] were employed as managers and administrators. Although Filipino Americans were represented in disproportionately large numbers in the professional and technical category, they were represented in disproportionately small numbers in the managerial and administrative category.

Moreover, the proportion of Asian Americans in the four lowest paying occupational categories exceeded the proportion of majority Americans in those categories, as shown in figure 2.3. All groups except Chinese American females were employed in

[9] *U.S. Summary*, table 88.
[10] *Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos*, table 5.
[11] Ibid., table 20.
[12] Ibid., table 35.
[13] Ibid., table 48.
[14] Montero, *Vietnamese Americans*. These percentages were derived from data in table C.1.6, page 93.
[15] *Japanese, Chinese and Filipinos*, table 46.
[16] U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Special Concerns, *A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities Based on the 1970 Census, Vol. II: Asian Americans* (1974), p. 67 (hereafter cited as *Asian Americans*).
[17] *U.S. Summary*, table 88.
[18] Ibid.
[19] *Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos*, tables 5, 20, 35, 46, and 48.
[20] Ibid., tables 7, 22, and 37.
[21] Ibid., table 37.
[22] *U.S. Summary*, table 224.
[23] *Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos*, table 37.
[24] Ibid.

TABLE 2.1
Median number of school years completed by ethnicity and sex, 1970

	Males	Females
Japanese Americans	12.6	12.4
Chinese Americans	12.6	12.3
Filipino Americans	11.9	12.6
Korean Americans	12.9*	12.9*
Hawaiians	12.1*	12.1*
Majority	12.1	12.1

*Includes males and females. Data not available for each sex separately.

Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports: Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States*, PC(2)-1G, 1973, tables 5, 20, 35, 46 and 48; and *U.S. Summary*, 1970, table 88.

TABLE 2.2
Percent of population with less than five years of schooling, by ethnic group, 1970

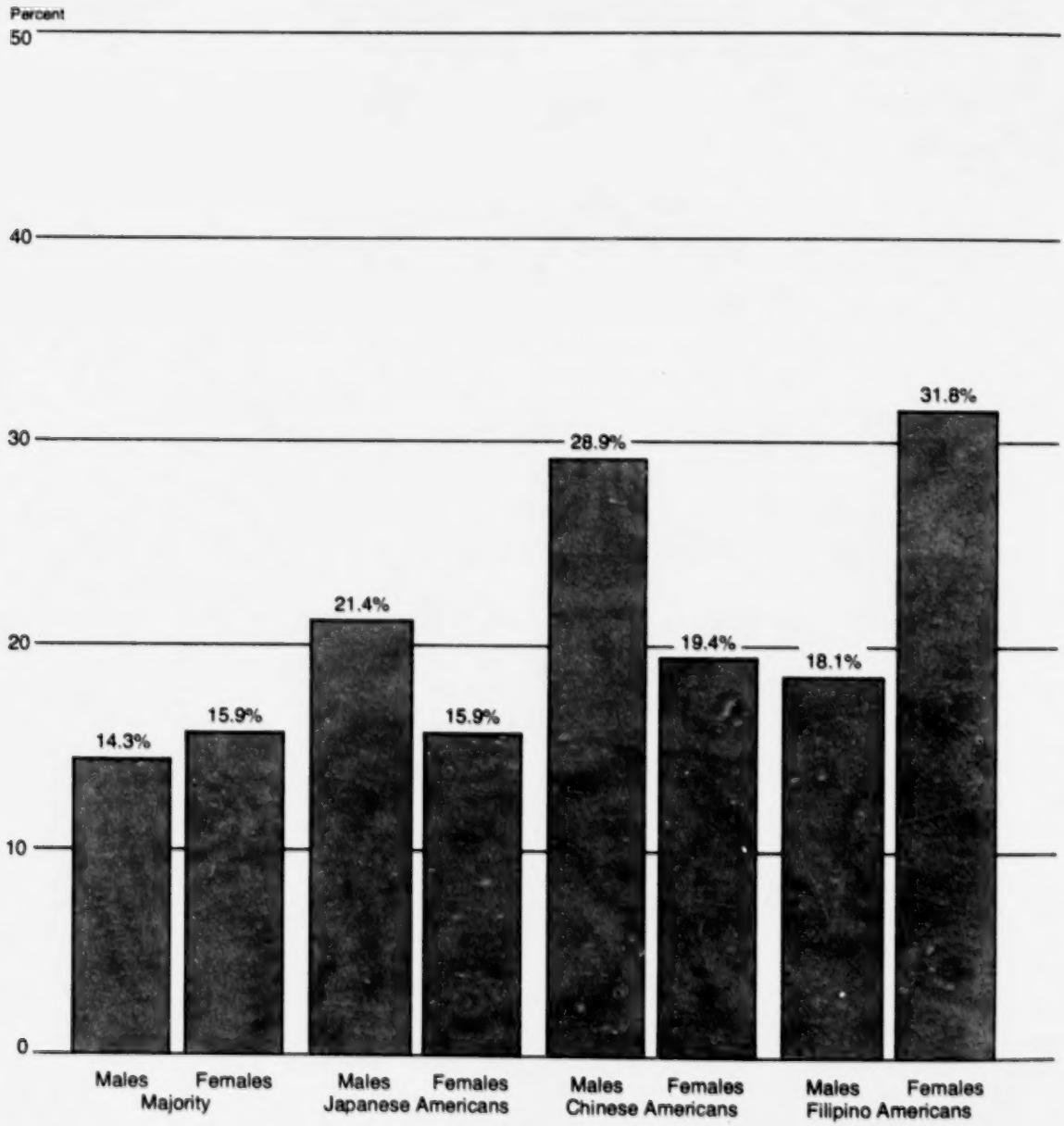
	Males	Females
Japanese Americans	3.1%	3.8%
Chinese Americans	9.6%	15.3%
Filipino Americans	16.1%	7.3%
Korean Americans	5.6%*	5.6%*
Hawaiians	5.2%*	5.2%*
Majority	4.8%	4.1%

*Includes males and females. Data not available for each sex separately.

Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports: Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States*, PC(2)-1G, 1973, tables 5, 20, 35, 46, and 47; and *U.S. Summary*, 1970, table 88.

FIGURE 2.1

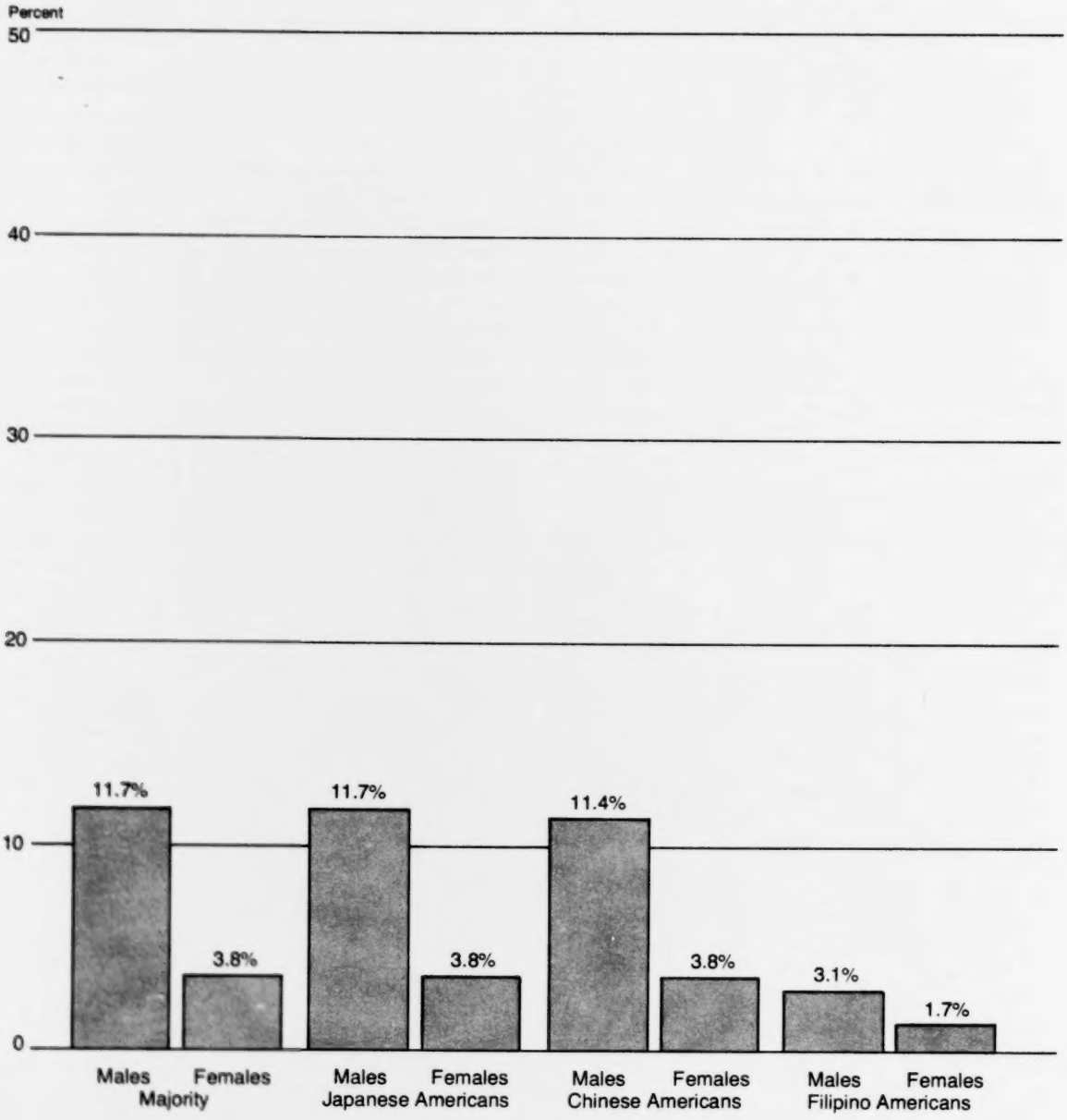
Percentage of Persons Employed in Professional and Technical Positions by Ethnic Group, 1970



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports: Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States*, PC(2) 1-G, 1973 tables 7, 22 and 37; and *U.S. Summary* 1970, table 224.

FIGURE 2.2

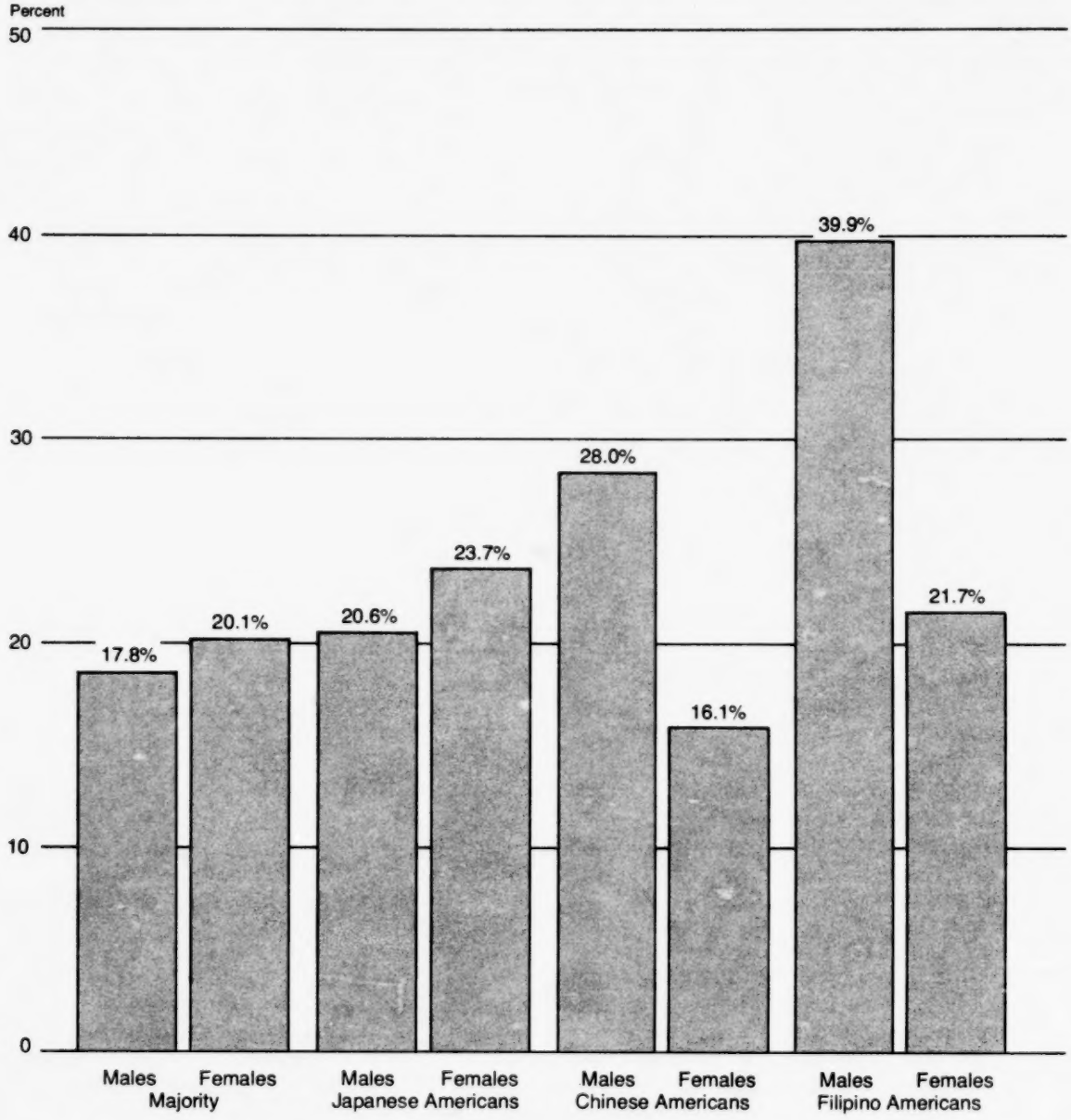
Percentage of Persons Employed as Managers and Administrators by Ethnic Group, 1970



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports: Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States*, PC(2)-1G, 1973, tables 7, 22 and 37; and *U.S. Summary*, 1970, table 224.

FIGURE 2.3

Percentage of Persons in Four Lowest Paying Occupational Categories by Ethnic Group 1970



Includes private household workers, service workers, farmers (including farm managers and laborers), and laborers.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports: Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States,* PC(2) 1-G, 1973, tables 7, 22 and 37; and *U.S. Summary,* 1970, table 224.

the four lowest paying occupations more often than majority Americans.[25] The percentage of Filipino American males in those jobs was more than double the proportion of majority males. A complete analysis of the occupational categories is shown in table A.1 of appendix A.

These data show a different side of the employment picture of Asian Americans than is usually shown by the "success" literature. Although a disproportionately large number of Asian Americans were in professional and technical positions, they were not disproportionately represented in managerial and administrative positions. Furthermore, they were considerably overrepresented in the lowest paying occupational categories. These data show that some Asian Americans are doing quite well, but more are doing less well.

Although many Asian Americans have high levels of education, these occupational data show that their education does not always lead to a high-paying job. An earlier study by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Social Indicators of Equality for Minorities and Women,* also reported that Asian Americans were often overqualified for their jobs in terms of their education. This study found that college-educated Japanese American, Chinese American, and Filipino American males were more likely than majority American males to be employed in occupations that required less education than they had.[26] A 1974 study by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare had similar results. HEW analyzed data from the 1970 census and found considerable underemployment among Asian Americans.[27] To demonstrate this point, HEW constructed a ratio of college-educated persons to persons in the two highest paying occupational categories; these ratios are shown in table 2.3. In the entire U.S. population, there were 1.5 males in these occupations for every male with a college education and 1.0 females for every female with a college education. For both males and females in all three cited groups the ratios were lower.[28] For example, among Filipino American males, the ratio was less than 1; there were more college-educated males, in other words, than there were males in the two highest paying occupational categories. HEW concluded that "it is easier for persons in the majority population to obtain employment in higher level jobs *without* a college degree than it is for the Asian Americans."[29]

HEW further argued that the proportion of Asian Americans in professional and technical positions, long used as an indicator of their success, is not necessarily an accurate indicator of how hard they have worked or the extent of discrimination against them. Instead, it is due in part to the effects of American immigration policy. For the past few years, that policy has encouraged the immigration of professionals from Asia.[30] Many Asian Americans are naturalized citizens who were able to obtain citizenship because they had high levels of education and were in professional and technical occupations prior to immigration. HEW demonstrated this by examining data on immigration supplied by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. HEW reported that over the preceding 8 years, individuals in professional and managerial positions represented 53 percent of all Japanese immigrants and over two-thirds of all immigrants from Korea.[31] One result of American immigration policy, therefore, appears to be an increase in the number of highly educated individuals in professional and managerial occupations.

A study of the economic status of Korean American immigrants, done by historian H. Brett Melendy of the University of Hawaii, found that many recent immigrants had difficulty in obtaining suitable employment. Melendy reported that recent immigrants from Korea "found it difficult to cope with the job market in the United States."[32] In 1973 about 20 percent of these Korean Americans in Los Angeles had been unable to find work, although almost all were well-educated. The employment problems were greater for men than for women. Frequently, Korean American men trained in fields such as pharmacy were found working as service station attendants or other low-paying jobs that did not utilize their technical education and experience.[33]

Asian Americans who are in business for themselves appear to fare poorly, too. The only national report on the status of Asian American businesses is

[25] Although Chinese American females were in the four lowest paying occupational categories less often than majority females, they were employed as operatives considerably more often (22.5 percent) than majority females (14.7 percent). Ibid., table 7, and *U.S. Summary,* table 224.
[26] U.S., Commission on Civil Rights, *Social Indicators of Equality for Minorities and Women* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978), table 2.6, p. 20 (hereafter cited as *Social Indicators).*
[27] *Asian Americans,* p. 103.
[28] Ibid., p. 102.
[29] Ibid., p. 103.
[30] Ibid., p. 89.
[31] Ibid., pp. 91 and 141.
[32] H. Brett Melendy, *Asians in America: Filipinos, Koreans, and East Indians* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977), p. 170.
[33] Ibid., p. 171.

TABLE 2.3

Ratio of persons in professional and managerial positions to persons with four or more years of college, 1970

	Males	Females
Japanese Americans	1.3	0.9
Chinese Americans	1.1	0.7
Filipino Americans	0.9	0.7
Total United States Population	1.5	1.0

This table may be read as follows: For every one Japanese American male with a college education, there are approximately 1.3 Japanese Americans males in professional and managerial positions. In the United States as a whole, for every one male with a college education there are 1.5 males in these positions.

Source: U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Special Concerns, *A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities Based on the 1970 Census, Volume II: Asian Americans*, 1974.

a 1977 study by the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. According to this study, which used data collected by the Bureau of the Census in 1972, Asian Americans owned 66,841 firms in 1972.[34] The largest number were either retail stores, eating and drinking places, or personal service firms such as laundries.[35] Most of these businesses were only marginally profitable. Overall, about 84 percent of all firms owned by Asian Americans had annual gross receipts of less than $25,000,[36] and 42 percent had annual gross receipts of under $5,000.[37] The OMBE study concluded that Asian Americans have a "marginal business base. . .in the U.S. business population. . . .[They] are *not* in the mainstream of American business. . .[and] are not competing well in securing a proportionate share of the market."[38]

Income

Data on the income of Asian Americans and majority Americans are also available from the 1970 census. These data show that the income of Asian Americans was generally lower than the income of majority Americans. With the exception of Japanese American and Korean American males, the median annual income of Asian Americans was lower than the income of majority males.[39] (These data are shown in figure 2.4.)

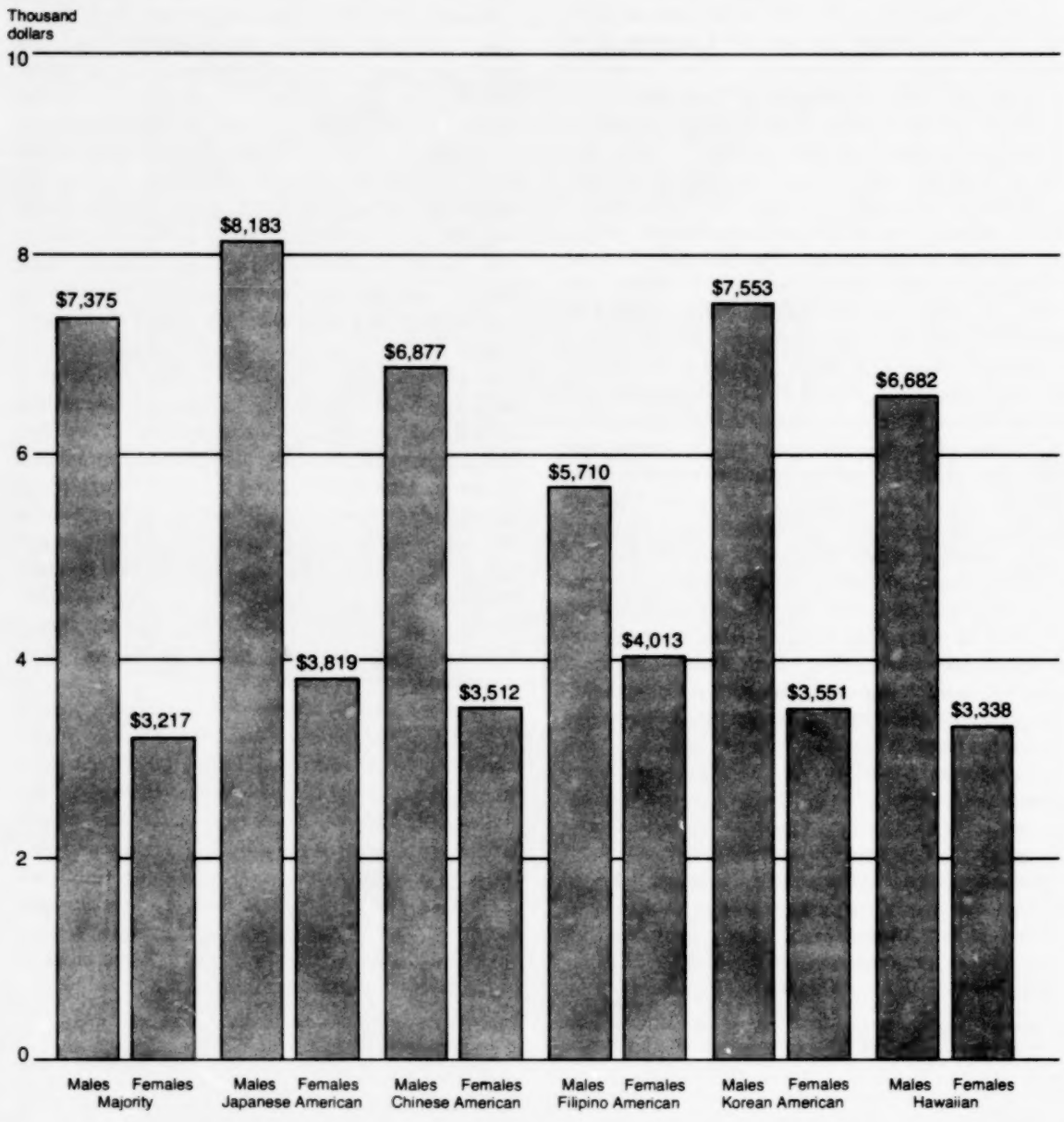
As with occupation, the income of Asian Americans was lower than that of majority Americans with the same level of education. Although many had achieved a higher level of education than majority males, their incomes were lower. Filipino American females, for instance, had the highest proportion of college graduates, yet they earned only about one-half the income of majority males. The stereotype of success, which generally has focused on the high level of education and the percentage in professional and technical positions, ignores the fact that the income of most Asian American groups is lower than the income of majority males.

The relatively high income of Japanese American and Korean American males undoubtedly reflects the high proportion of college graduates and relatively low proportion of poorly educated people in those two groups. Although Japanese American males earned more than majority males, they were also far better educated. The HEW study cited earlier examined the relationship between education and income and concluded that the relative incomes of Japanese Americans were "lagging behind those of the total population."[40] The Commission study, *Social Indicators of Equality for Minorities and Women*, made a similar finding. Although the mean earnings for Japanese American males were higher than for majority Americans, the report found that Japanese American males earned somewhat less in 1975 than majority males in the same situation, including those with the same educational attainment.[41]

[34] U.S., Department of Commerce, Office of Minority Business Enterprise, *Socio-Economic Analysis of Asian American Business Patterns* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1977), p. 5.
[35] Ibid., table 5, p. 12.
[36] Ibid., p. 23.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., pp. 84–85.
[39] *Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos*, tables 6, 21, 26, 47, and 49; and *U.S. Summary*, table 245.
[40] *Asian Americans*, p. 104.
[41] *Social Indicators*, table 4.3, p. 54.

Figure 2.4

Mean Annual Income of Employed Persons, by Ethnic Group and Sex, 1970



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports: Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States,* 1973, tables 7, 22, 37, 47 and 49; and U.S. Summary, 1970, table 245.

Not only was the income of Asian Americans low for their level of education, but the discrepancy was greater when their area of residence is taken into consideration. Unlike the majority population, which is dispersed in cities and rural areas throughout the Nation, almost one-half (47.9 percent) of all Asian Americans in the mainland United States live in four Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs): San Francisco-Oakland, Los Angeles-Long Beach, New York, and Chicago.[42] In addition, many Hawaiians and other Asian Americans reside in Honolulu. These SMSAs are all expensive areas in which both the cost of living and incomes are among the highest in the Nation. The income of Asian Americans should reflect this, but available data show that they earn less than majority males with similar educational levels in each of these SMSAs.[43]

Amado Cabezas, director of human services research at the Asian American Service Institute for Assistance to Neighborhoods (ASIAN, Inc.), analyzed data from the 1970 census which demonstrate this point. (Data for college-educated males in these SMSAs are shown in figure 2.5.) In the Chicago SMSA, for example, college-educated majority males earned a median salary of $14,408 in 1970, but Japanese Americans earned $10,500, Chinese Americans earned $9,500, and Filipino Americans earned $6,250.[44] In every SMSA except Honolulu, majority males earned more—often much more—than similarly educated Asian American males. College-educated majority females also earned more than Asian American females in most cases; the two exceptions were Japanese American females, who earned more than majority females in all SMSAs except Honolulu, and Filipino American females who earned more than majority females in Honolulu.

Cabezas found that the same situation existed at all educational levels: majority males in each SMSA earned more. Among high school graduates, for instance, majority males earned over $10,000 in the New York SMSA, but Japanese American males and Chinese American males earned less than $7,000, and Filipino American males earned $8,500. (These data are shown in tables A.2 through A.4 in appendix A.)

Several other studies have confirmed the fact that Asian Americans earn less than majority Americans with the same level of education. In a paper presented at the National Conference of Social Welfare in 1975, Tom Owan, of the Social Security Administration, reported that the national median family income of Asian Americans was close to the median of majority Americans.[45] Owan then compared the incomes of Asian Americans in six SMSAs with the incomes of majority Americans in those SMSAs. He reported that majority Americans in each SMSA earned considerably more than Asian Americans.[46]

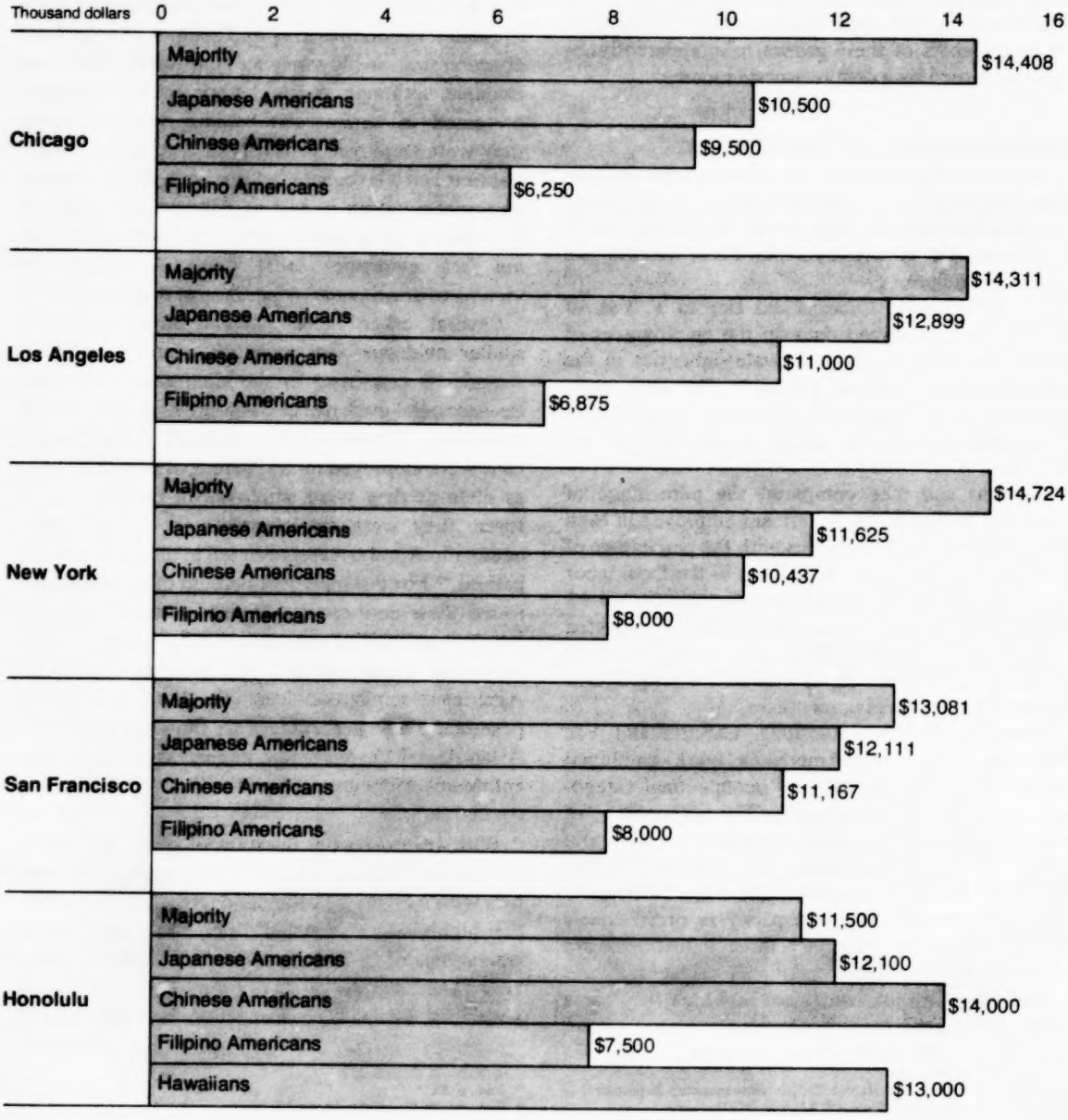
In another study, Betty Lee Sung, professor of Asian studies at City College of New York, analyzed census data for Chinese Americans and found that 59.6 percent of majority male college graduates earned at least $10,000, but only 38.3 percent of Chinese American male college graduates earned that much.[47] At every educational level, the proportion of Chinese Americans earning $10,000 or more was lower than the proportion of majority American males.[48] Sung concluded that the income of Chinese Americans was "in no way commensurate with their educational achievement."[49]

There is a general consensus regarding the income of Chinese Americans: findings similar to Sung's have been reported by the HEW study,[50] and more recently economist Yuan-Li Wu has shown that the income of Chinese American males has lagged behind the income of the total U.S. male population for the past three decades.[51] Using the California portion of the 1970 census data, both sociologist Robert M. Jiobu[52] and economist Harold H. Wong[53] have also demonstrated the lower relative incomes of Chinese Americans in California.

[43] *Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos*, tables 11, 26, 41, and 48.
[44] Amado Y. Cabezas, "Disadvantaged Employment Status of Asian and Pacific Americans," in *Civil Rights Issues of Asian and Pacific Americans: Myths and Realities*, a consultation sponsored by U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979, pp. 441–42, tables 4, 5, and 6.
[45] Ibid., table 4.
[46] Tom Owan, "Asian Americans: A Case of Benighted Neglect" (paper presented at the National Conference of Social Welfare, 1975), p. 23.
[47] Ibid., pp. 23–24. The six SMSAs were Los Angeles-Long Beach, San Francisco-Oakland, Seattle-Everett, Chicago, New York, and Boston.
[48] U.S., Department of Labor, Manpower Administration, *Chinese American Manpower and Employment*, by Betty Lee Sung (1975), pp. 93 and 95.
[49] Ibid., p. 94.
[50] Ibid., 95.
[51] *Asian Americans*, pp. 109–13.
[52] Yuan-Li Wu, "Income, Employment and Occupational Patterns: Three Decades of Change," in *The Economic Condition of Chinese Americans*, ed. Yuan-Li Wu (Chicago: Asian American Mental Health Research Center, 1980) pp. 6–9.
[53] Robert M. Jiobu, "Earnings Differentials Between Whites and Ethnic Minorities: The Cases of Asian Americans, Blacks and Chicanos," *Sociology and Social Research*, vol. 61 (1976), pp. 24–38.
[54] Harold H. Wong, "The Relative Economic Status of Chinese, Japanese, Black, and White Men in California" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1974).

FIGURE 2.5

Median Annual Income of College-Educated Males in Five SMSAs, by Ethnic Group, 1970



Source: "Civil Rights Issues of Asian and Pacific Americans: Myths and Realities," Amado Y. Cabezas, paper presented at consultation sponsored by U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979, table 3A.

Overall, this analysis of the income of Asian Americans presents a different picture than could be expected from their frequently high educational attainment. Asian Americans earn far less than majority Americans with the same level of education. The desire and willingness to be successful, manifested in the high educational attainment of many members of these groups, have apparently not been rewarded by a commensurate income.

Discrimination in Employment

Several recent studies have examined the occupations and salaries of Asian Americans to determine whether members of these groups are the victims of discrimination in employment. These studies are summarized here.

In 1977, Amado Cabezas and Harold T. Yee, of ASIAN Inc., analyzed data on the employment of Asian Americans in large private industries in the San Francisco-Oakland SMSA.[54] The data were supplied by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which sponsored the research.

Cabezas and Yee compared the percentage of male and female Asian Americans employed in each job category in 132 industries with the percentage of male and female Asian Americans in the local labor force. In 1975 Asian American males constituted 4.2 percent of the labor force and females constituted 3.3 percent.[55] The employment was considered to be at parity if it did not show a statistically significant difference from these percentages.

Using EEOC data for 1975, Cabezas and Yee reported that Asian Americans were employed below parity in a majority of occupational categories, including "manager."[56] (The proportion of Asian Americans employed as managers is shown in figure 2.6.) Asian Americans were employed below parity as managers in those few industries where they were employed above parity as professionals and/or technicians. In only three industries were Asian Americans above parity as managers,[57] and overall the only job categories in which they were employed significantly above parity were "clerk" and "service worker."

Cabezas and Yee also examined employment of Asian Americans in each type of industry, finding that they were employed below parity in construction, wholesale trades, and manufacturing industries,[58] all of which have high wage levels.[59] In the few industries where they were above parity (such as retail trade and banking and insurance) they were concentrated in low-paying job categories. For example, although Asian Americans were overrepresented in commercial banking and insurance, they were employed primarily as clerical workers.[60] Cabezas and Yee concluded that such disproportionate representation in low-paying industries and in low-paying occupational categories constituted "*prima facie* evidence. . .that Asian Americans are victims of discriminatory patterns of employment."[61]

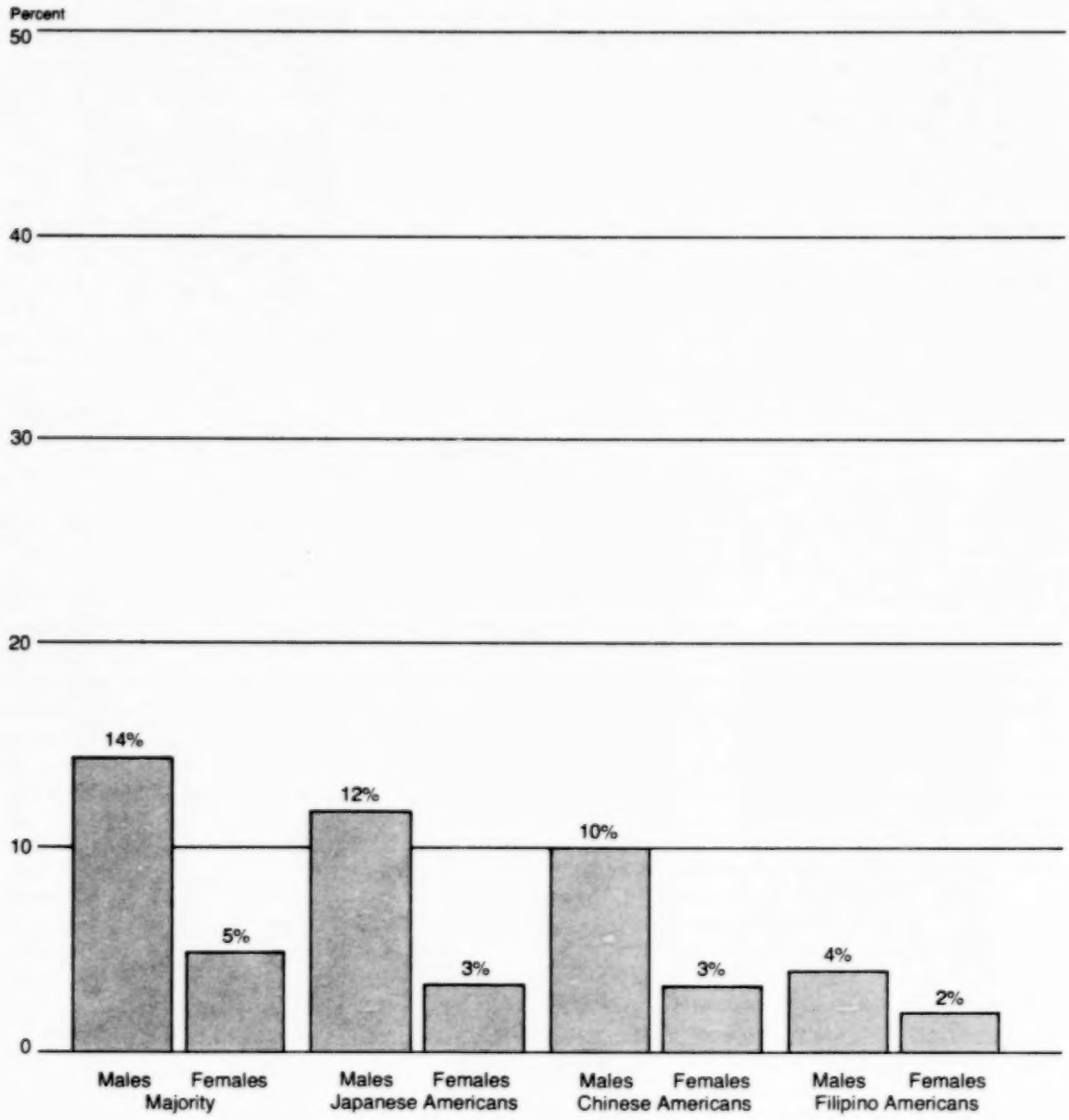
Several other recent studies have uncovered similar evidence. For example, a study of Asian Americans employed in the California State civil service found evidence of disparate representation of members of these groups. Although Asian Americans were employed in the State civil service at least as often as they were employed in the local labor force, they were underrepresented in high-salary occupations and overrepresented in low-salary occupations.[62] For instance, 19.1 percent of all employees in the State civil service were in clerical positions, but 29.0 percent of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean American employees and 50.1 percent of Filipino American employees were in those low-paying positions. These percentages are shown in figure 2.7. Asian Americans were also underrepresented in law enforcement occupations and in positions requiring manual skills.[63]

With regard to the question of disparate salary, several recent studies of the employment of individuals with advanced academic degrees have reported that highly educated Asian Americans do not fare as well as majority Americans with the same education. In an analysis of survey data collected by the American Council on Education on over 42,000

[54] Amado Y. Cabezas and Harold T. Yee, *Discriminatory Employment of Asian Americans* (San Francisco: ASIAN, Inc., 1977).
[55] Ibid., p. 68.
[56] Ibid., p. 125.
[57] Ibid., pp. 130–32. The three industries were communications services (excluding radio and television), eating and drinking places, and hotels and other lodging places.
[58] Ibid., p. 83.
[59] Ibid., pp. 79–82, and fig. 12, pp. 76–78.
[60] Ibid., p. 83.
[61] Ibid., p. 8.
[62] State of California, State Personnel Board, *The Status of Asian and Filipino Employees in the California State Civil Service* (1976), p. 1.
[63] Ibid., table 1-D, p. 14.

FIGURE 2.6

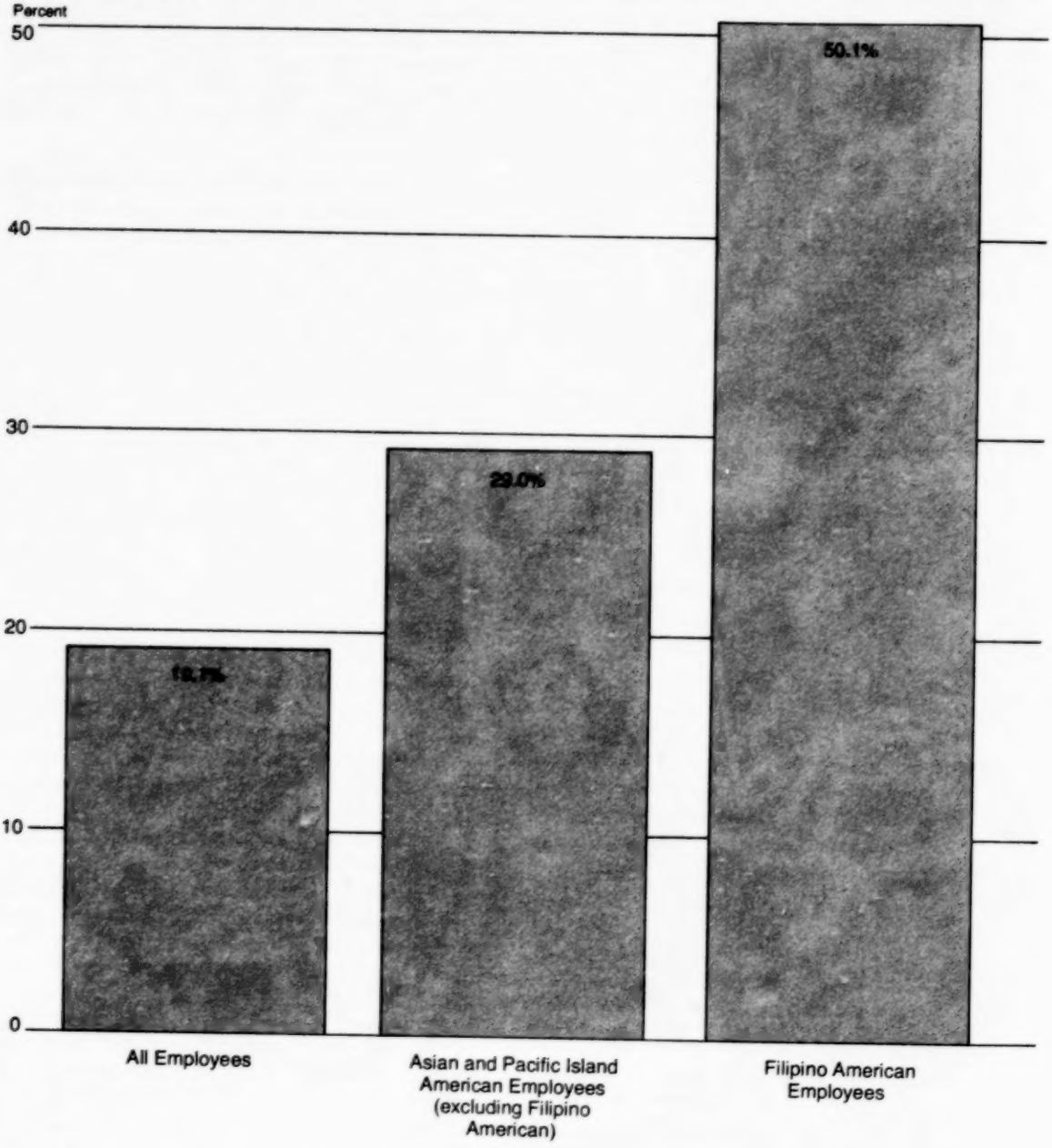
Proportion of Persons Employed as Managers and Administrators, by Ethnic Group, 1975



Source: Amado Y. Cabezas and Harold T. Yee, *Discriminatory Employment of Asian Americans*, ASIAN, Inc., 1977, tables 2 and 3.

FIGURE 2.7

Percentage of Persons in Clerical Positions in California State Civil Service by Ethnic Group, 1976



Source: California State Personnel Board, *The Status of Asian and Filipino Employees in the California State Civil Service*, 1976, table I-D.

teaching faculty at 301 institutions of higher education,[64] Richard Freeman of the Urban Institute concluded that Asian American faculty earned lower salaries than majority faculty. When he took into consideration the number of publications, an important factor in faculty salary determination, Freeman found that Asian Americans published more frequently than majority faculty, yet majority faculty had higher salaries.[65] Freeman concluded that "the presumption is of. . .discrimination."[66]

In a survey of over 33,000 doctoral scientists and engineers who received Ph.D.s in 1970 or later and were employed in institutions of higher education, the National Research Council found that Asian Americans had the lowest median salary in 1975.[67] Based on an analysis of American Council on Education data of 1972 and 1973, Thomas Sowell, an economist long active in the field of employment discrimination, drew a similar conclusion about Asian Americans. They "receive less than. . .whites with the same qualifications," he said, "and only the fact that they have generally better qualifications. . .conceals this."[68]

The Survey of Earned Doctorates conducted by the National Research Council provides further evidence that well-educated Asian Americans are not treated equally with majority Americans. This survey included all individuals with earned doctorates in all fields in the United States.[69] The council reported that approximately two-thirds of all doctoral students had definite offers of employment at the time their degrees were awarded. In 1973, 68 percent had definite offers of employment; in 1974, 67 percent; in 1975, 69 percent; and in 1976, 63 percent.[70] Over the same 4-year period, however, the proportion of Asian American doctoral students with definite employment offers was always lower than that of majority students.[71] In 1976, for instance, the proportion of majority male doctorates with definite employment offers at the time they received their degrees was 63 percent, but for Asian Americans it was 45 percent. The same was true for females; 58 percent of majority females and 52 percent of Asian females had offers of employment.[72]

[64] Richard D. Freeman, "Discrimination in the Academic Marketplace," in *Essays and Data on American Ethnic Groups*, ed. T. Sowell (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1978), p. 168.
[65] Ibid., p. 198.
[66] Ibid., p. 197.
[67] National Academy of Sciences, Commission on Human Resources, *Women and Minority Ph.D.s in the 1970s: A Data Book*, by Dorothy M. Gilford and Joan Snyder (1977), table II-7, p. 80 (hereafter cited as *Women and Minority Ph.D.s).*

Summary

The data and studies reviewed in this chapter do not support the assertion that Asian Americans are uniformly successful. The stereotype of their success that has developed since the sixties does not convey an accurate portrayal of members of these groups for several reasons.

First, the idea that all Asian Americans have achieved a high level of economic well-being ignores vast differences among groups within the Asian communities. The data analysis shows that the groups of Asian Americans for which data were available were extremely heterogeneous and often differed considerably on the factors of income, education, and occupation. Furthermore, there were no data at all for many Asian American groups, including people from such diverse places as Guam, Thailand, the Fiji Islands, and Cambodia. Some Asian Americans are recent immigrants; many others are from families who have lived in this country for generations. These differences should caution the reader to avoid making generalizations about "all" Asian Americans.

Second, the stereotype of success focuses on those Asian Americans who are doing well, but it ignores the large number who are not. The percentage of college graduates, for instance, is high among many groups of Asian Americans. On the other hand, the proportion of adults with fewer than 5 years of schooling is also high when compared with majority Americans. Although many Asian Americans are in high-paying occupations, a disproportionately large number are also in low-paying jobs. Moreover, many of the Asian Americans in professional and technical positions are recent immigrants. The large numbers in this occupational category at least partially reflect American immigration policy, not solely the upward mobility of second- and third-generation citizens. On the contrary, there appears to be considerable underemployment among Asian Americans; a good education has not consistently led either to a high-paying job or to an income equal to that of comparably educated majority Americans.

Finally, even those Asian Americans who are doing well in their occupations, and who have high

[68] Thomas Sowell, *Affirmative Action Reconsidered* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), p. 17.
[69] *Women and Minority Ph.D.s*, p. 8.
[70] Ibid., table I-17, p. 60.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

levels of education, are worse off than similar majority Americans. Asian Americans still do not earn incomes that are equal to the incomes of majority Americans who have the same education and live in the same SMSAs.

Chapter 3

Consequences of the Success Stereotype

As previous chapters have shown, the belief is widely held that Asian Americans are a successful minority who no longer suffer from disadvantage. This belief, however, is not supported by the facts. Many Asian Americans take issue with the "model minority" perspective. They argue that the presentation of Asian Americans as a model of hard work rewarded by success misrepresents their real status by making them appear problem free,[1] and they feel resentment.[2]

Official inattention to the problems and needs of Asian Americans may arise from tacit acceptance of the view that they have achieved success and are therefore without problems. If a minority group is viewed as successful, it is unlikely that its members will be included in programs designed to alleviate problems they encounter as minorities. If representatives of such a group are absent during deliberations concerning ameliorative programs and policies, it is also possible that the group may be excluded from the programs.

Numerous charges[3] of neglect and inattention have appeared in publications about the status of Asian Americans. Exemplifying these is a statement made by the Asian and Pacific American panel in its 1978 report to the President's Commission on Mental Health.[4] The panel, consisting of 25 researchers, scholars, and community workers, concluded that the success stereotype had led to neglect:

> There is widespread belief that Asian and Pacific Americans do not suffer the discrimination and disadvantages associated with other minority groups. The fact is that in spite of recent efforts to promote civil rights and equal opportunities for ethnic minorities in the United States, Asian and Pacific Americans have been largely neglected and ignored by governmental

[1] Harry H.L. Kitano and Stanley Sue, "The Model Minorities," *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 29 (1973), p. 3; "Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites," *Newsweek*, June 21, 1971, p. 24; E.H. Kim, "The Myth of Asian American Success," *Asian American Review*, vol. 2 (1975), p. 125.

[2] This feeling of anger and resentment can be found in numerous sources. A few better known sources are Minako K. Maykovich, "Political Activation of Japanese American Youth," *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 29 (1973), p. 167; E.H. Kim, "The Myth of Asian American Success," *Asian American Review*, vol. 2 (1975), p. 140; Russell Endo, "Japanese Americans: The 'Model Minority' in Perspective," in *The Social Reality of Ethnic America*, ed. Rudolph Gomez, Clement Cottingham, Jr., Russell Endo, and Kathleen Jackson (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1974), pp. 203–04.

The same theme of resentment is present in such anthologies of Asian Americans as Cheng-Tsu Wu, ed., *"CHINK!"* (New York: World Publishing, 1972); Amy Tachiki, Eddie Wong, Franklin Odo, and Buck Wong, eds., *Roots: An Asian American Reader* (Los Angeles: Asian American Studies Center, University of California at Los Angeles, 1971); and issues of *Asian American Review*, published by the Department of Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

[3] The charges of neglect and inattention have appeared in many publications: Kitano and Sue, "The Model Minorities," p. 1; Stanley Sue, Derald W. Sue, and David W. Sue, "Asian Americans As A Minority Group," *American Psychologist*, vol. 30 (1975), p. 906; Bok-Lim C. Kim and Margaret E. Condon, *A Study of Asian Americans in Chicago: Their Socio-Economic Characteristics, Problems and Service Needs* (final report submitted to the National Institute of Mental Health, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Grant No. RO1MH 23993-01, Oct. 15, 1975), p. 7 (hereafter cited as *Asian Americans in Chicago)* ; Bok-Lim C. Kim, "Problems and Service Needs of Asian Americans in Chicago: An Empirical Study," *Amerasia Journal*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1978), p. 24; California Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Asian American and Pacific Peoples: A Case of Mistaken Identity* (February 1975), p. 28; New York Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The Forgotten Minority: Asian Americans in New York City* (November 1977), p. 28.

[4] President's Commission on Mental Health, report of the Special Populations Subpanel on Mental Health of Asian/Pacific Americans, *Task Panel Reports* (1978), vol. III, pp. 773–819.

agencies, educational institutions, private corporations, and other sectors of society.[5]

Very few studies have been conducted on the needs of Asian Americans.[6] Until such data are available, and until minority-targeted Federal and State programs are evaluated concerning service to Asian Americans, conclusions of neglect and exclusion remain observational and tentative. These charges, however, underscore the need for research. Senate Joint Resolution 23,[7] introduced in 1979 by Senators Spark M. Matsunaga and Daniel Inouye, recognizes this data need and, if passed by both the Senate and the House of Representatives, would require data-gathering Federal agencies to collect data or improve their methods of data collection, analysis, and dissemination on Asian Americans. The remainder of this chapter describes several specific incidents of Asian Americans being overlooked or omitted from consideration at the Federal level.

President's Commission on Mental Health

The President's Commission on Mental Health was created in February 1977 by an Executive order[8] and issued its final report in 1978.[9] When this Commission was created, not a single Asian or Pacific American was among the minorities appointed to the 20-member Commission.[10] An Asian and Pacific American task force was subsequently formed, however, and a report was submitted to the President's Commission.[11] In its report, the panel indicated its concern about not having an Asian American representative on the Commission:

> Its [the panel's] contribution was severely limited due to the exclusion of appropriate Asian and Pacific American representatives on the President's Commission on Mental Health itself. [It] is still lacking the articulation and full representation of the Asian and Pacific American perspective.[12]

The panel concluded its report with the following statement:

> if the Commission's final report does not adequately address [Asian and Pacific American] concerns, this action by the Commission will have to be interpreted. . .as another example of how [they] have been excluded from crucial aspects of the Commission's activities.[13]

K. Patrick Okura, a Japanese American long active in the field of mental health, noted at the Commission's consultation that the absence of Asian Americans from the President's Commission was attributable to the widespread belief that Asian Americans are a problem-free model minority.[14]

Small Business Act

Another example illustrating the same point is the 1979 action of the Small Business Administration (SBA) concerning whether Asian Americans were to be designated a socially and economically disadvantaged group. From the beginning of the minority business development program in 1968,[15] the SBA had included Asian Americans as a minority group. Because the SBA wished to institutionalize minority involvement in its program, the agency approached Congress to act to ensure minority involvement by passing legislation. The result was Public Law 95-507. This law did not include Asian Americans as an eligible minority, however. In May 1979 Rep. Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced an amendment[16] to the Small Business Administration Act to include them. The amendment is pending before Congress.[17]

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[5] President's Commission on Mental Health, "Mental Health of Asian/Pacific Americans," p. 785.

[6] Bok-Lim C. Kim, *The Asian Americans: Changing Patterns, Changing Needs* (Montclair, N.J.: AKCS, 1978); U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Special Concerns, *Asian American Field Study: Summary of the Data* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1977) (hereafter cited as *Asian American Field Study)* ; Won Moo Hurh, Hei Chu Kim, and Kwange Chung Kim, *Assimilation Patterns of Immigrants in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978).

[7] S.J. Res. 23 would direct the Departments of Commerce, Labor, Agriculture, and Health, Education, and Welfare to collect and publish statistics on the health, economic, and social conditions of Asian Americans. It would also direct the Office of Management and Budget to develop a governmentwide program to collect, analyze, and publish data on Asian Americans for States with "significant populations" of Asian Americans. S.J. Res. 23, 96th Cong., 1st sess., §384 (1979).

[8] Executive Order No. 11973, 13 Weekly Comp. of Pres. Doc. 220-221 (Feb. 21, 1977).

[9] President's Commission on Mental Health, *Report to the President, 1978* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978), vols. I through IV.

[10] Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians were represented on the Commission. Ibid., vol. I, p. ii.

[11] Ibid., vol. III, pp. 773-819.

[12] Ibid., p. 777.

[13] Ibid., p. 813.

[14] K. Patrick Okura, in *Civil Rights Issues of Asian and Pacific Americans: Myths and Realities*, a consultation sponsored by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979, p. 669.

[15] SBA is authorized to enter into contracts with other government agencies and departments to negotiate subcontracts for them. 15 U.S.C. §637(a) (1970). It has been the policy of SBA to assist small businesses owned and controlled by "social or economically disadvantaged persons" in awarding these subcontracts. Asian Americans have been included in the groups eligible for this assistance. 13 C.F.R. §1248(1)(a), (b), and (c).

[16] H.R. 4011, 96th Cong., 1st Sess., 125 Cong. Rec. 3571 (1979).

[17] Asian Americans are to be named as a minority group eligible for SBA minority business programs within the Small Business Act when (and if) a

On May 22, 1979, the SBA received a petition to change the administrative regulations to redesignate Asian Americans as a "disadvantaged minority group" and accordingly gave notice that it would receive comments from the public on the requested change.[18] Upon reviewing the responses, the SBA announced in July 1979 that Asian Americans were again to be designated as a minority group for section 8(a) program purposes.[19]

Although the legislative omission was eventually corrected by the SBA, it was nevertheless necessary for concerned Asian Americans to petition the SBA to change its regulations and to respond to the subsequent SBA notice. The reaction of the Asian American communities to this situation was one of frustration that as a minority group they had "to prove their minority status."[20] Had there been recognition of the real economic status of Asian Americans, the initial legislative omission might not have occurred.

Proposed Communications Regulatory Commission

In March 1979 a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives to establish a new Communications Regulatory Commission to succeed the present Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The bill, H.R. 3333, contained several provisions pertaining specifically to minorities; one section dealt with employment,[21] and another would have established a loan guarantee program to aid minorities in purchasing radio and television stations.[22] The bill, however, did not include Asian Americans in its definition of "minority."[23] Although Asian Americans are considered a minority under current FCC regulations,[24] they were to be excluded from the protections offered other minority groups in the proposed new agency.[25]

During hearings on the bill, Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin of California, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications and principal author of the bill, stated that Asian Americans had achieved a high level of economic success and were "more prosperous than [majority] Americans."[26] He also said that he was aware of no Federal legislation that included Asian Americans as a minority group, because of their remarkable economic success.[27]

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights testified at hearings on this bill that Asian Americans are in need of protection in the communications industry.[28] The Commission's analysis of employment data for four San Francisco television stations showed that Asian American males were underrepresented as employees at three of them.[29] Although Asian American females were not underrepresented in overall employment, they were employed primarily in clerical positions.[30] Furthermore, as of April 1979, not one television or radio station in the United States was owned by Asian Americans.[31] The Commission concluded by saying that "Asian and Pacific Island Americans. . .should not be excluded from provisions in any legislation designed to protect minority groups."[32]

Bakke Brief by the Department of Justice

A portion of the brief[33] filed by the Department of Justice with the Supreme Court of the United States

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bill pending before Congress is enacted into law. A conference committee of Senate and House members has agreed to accept an amendment introduced by Rep. Norman Mineta and adopted by the House to amend the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958. The following is an excerpt from House Conference Report 96-705 to accompany S. 918.

(30) ELIGIBILITY OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

Existing law (as amended by Public Law 95-507) establishes or amends certain SBA remedial business development programs for the benefit of "socially and economically disadvantaged" business persons. These programs include specialized management and technical assistance (sec. 7(j)) and procurement assistance (sec. 8). Present law specifies that, subject to certain specified constraints, socially "disadvantaged" persons include "Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans and other minorities."

The House bill adds "Asian Pacific Americans" to the groups mentioned in existing law. The Senate bill has no comparable provision. The conference substitute adopts the House provision.

[18] 44 Fed. Reg. 31055 (May 30, 1979).

[19] 44 Fed. Reg. 42832 (July 20, 1979).

[20] Laura Chin, chairperson, Asian and Pacific American Federal Employee Council, letter to William A. Clement, Associate Administrator, Minority Small Business and Capital Ownership Development, Small Business Administration, June 29, 1979, p. 1.

[21] H.R. 3333, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (1979), §465.

[22] *Id.*, §709.

[23] *Id.*, §102.

[24] Report and Order in Matter of Petition for Rulemaking to Require Broadcast Licenses to Show Nondiscrimination in their Employment Practices, 23 F.C.C. 2d 431 (1970).

[25] Markup on H.R. 3333 was cancelled subject to the call of the chair. Edwina Dowell, subcommittee staff counsel, telephone interview, May 6, 1980.

[26] Colloquy between Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, and Arthur S. Flemming, Chairman, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, during hearings on H.R. 3333 on May 16, 1979.

[27] Ibid.

[28] U.S., Congress, House, Subcommittee on Communications of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, 96th Cong., 1st sess., testimony of Arthur S. Flemming, Chairman, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, May 16, 1979, p. 10 (hereafter cited as Flemming Testimony).

[29] Ibid., p. 13.

[30] Ibid.

[31] National Association of Broadcasters, *Broadcasting Fact Sheet* (April 1979), p. 2.

[32] Flemming Testimony, p. 13.

[33] U.S., Department of Justice, "Brief for the United States As Amicus

in the *Bakke* case may also be interpreted as an example of the consequences of the success stereotype. In the process of arguing why affirmative admissions programs in higher education are necessary as a remedial policy for the Nation's minority groups, the brief raised questions as to whether Asian Americans should be included in special admissions programs for minorities in professional schools.[34] The question of the inclusion of Asian Americans was later clarified by Wade McCree, Jr., Solicitor General of the United States, who said it was "certainly not to suggest that they [Asian Americans] are not entitled to consideration within the program. . . ."[35] The clarification, however, was prompted by extensive lobbying efforts of concerned Asian Americans. According to Ling-chi Wang, a teacher and community civil rights worker:

> the Asian American community was. . .concerned. . . .a meeting was held with both the Justice Department staff and the White House to discuss the sources and validity of the Justice Department's claims. Representatives of the Asian American communities. . . successfully persuaded the Solicitor General to modify the conclusions in his oral presentation before the United States Supreme Court.[36]

White House Conference on Aging

A final example of omission of Asian Americans occurred in the initial planning of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. The conference, authorized by a joint resolution, Public Law 90–526 (September 28, 1968),[37] aimed to "explore the circumstances of the nation's older population and to recommend policies needed to improve those circumstances. . . ."[38] A principal aim of the conference planners was to secure an adequate number of representatives of various minority groups.[39]

According to the report on this session,[40] however, the decision "to hold a special concerns session for Asian Americans" was made "only because a special request was made by concerned Asian Americans."[41] The planning for sessions for other minority groups had been in process for many months before the Asian American panel was formed,[42] and the 44 participants[43] asserted that the success stereotype had led to their initial omission from the conference:

> So pervasive is this myth [of Asian American success] that the planners of the White House Conference on Aging, the group most knowledgeable in the area of aging needs, failed to include a Special Concerns Session for Asian American elderly as part of its original agenda.[44]

Older Citizens

The stereotype of economic well-being probably has had its greatest negative effect on older Asian Americans. The well-being of older citizens is a significant problem in the Asian American communities, since these older citizens remain an invisible group to agencies that traditionally have aided older people.[45]

According to the 1970 census data, about one-fifth (19 percent) of Japanese Americans age 65 and older had incomes below the federally-established poverty lines;[46] 25 percent of older Filipino Americans were poor;[47] and 28 percent of older Chinese Americans were poor.[48] Moreover, in many urban areas, larger proportions of older Asian Americans were poor. In the State of New York, for example, 40 percent of older Chinese Americans lived below the poverty line.[49]

The low educational attainment of older Asian Americans also stands in sharp contrast to the stereotype of success. The median number of school years completed among older, second-generation Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino Americans was less than 9 years for both males and females. Foreign-

Curiae," in *Landmark Briefs and Arguments of the Supreme Court of the United States: Constitutional Law, 1977 Term Supplement*, vol. 99, ed. Philip B. Kurland and Gerhard Casper (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1978), pp. 293–390 (hereafter cited as "Bakke Brief" and *Landmark Briefs*, respectively).

[34] "Bakke Brief," pp. 346–47.

[35] *Landmark Briefs*, vol. 100, p. 641.

[36] L. Ling-Chi Wang, in *Civil Rights Issues of Asian and Pacific Americans: Myths and Realities*, a consultation sponsored by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979, pp. 371–72.

[37] The 1971 White House Conference on Aging, *Toward A National Policy on Aging*, vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 4.

[38] Ibid., p. vii.

[39] Ibid., p. 13.

[40] Ibid., vol. II, pp. 159–64.

[41] Ibid., p. 160.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., p. 159.

[44] Ibid., p. 160.

[45] Ibid., pp. 159–60.

[46] U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Special Concerns, *A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities Based on the 1970 Census, Volume II: Asian Americans* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 128.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Tom Owan, "Asian Americans: A Case of Benighted Neglect" (paper presented at National Conference of Social Welfare, 1975), p. 47.

TABLE 3.1
Median school years completed, persons 65 years old and older, by ethnic group and place of birth, 1970

	U.S. BORN		FOREIGN BORN	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Japanese Americans	8.6	7.8	8.5	7.4
Chinese Americans	7.7	8.1	6.2	0.9
Filipino Americans	5.4*	4.9*	5.4*	4.9*

*Includes U.S. and foreign born. Data not available for U.S. and foreign born separately.

Source: U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Special Concerns, *A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities Based on the 1970 Census, Volume II: Asian Americans*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974), pp. 71, 73, and 75.

born citizens had even less education, as table 3.1 shows.

The problems facing older Asian Americans are in many ways unique, resulting in part from the long history of discriminatory legislation against these groups which some older members have personally experienced. In the past, a large number of States and municipalities passed laws prohibiting Asian and Pacific immigrants from holding many occupations, often including teacher, lawyer, veterinarian, and physician.[50] Because first-generation immigrants were ineligible for citizenship until at least 1943,[51] they could not work for the Federal Government[52] or most State governments.[53] In addition, 11 Western States prohibited Asian immigrants from owning land.[54] Finally, many Asian men, especially Chinese, immigrated to this Nation prior to 1924 with the intention of earning enough money to send for their wives,[55] but the Immigration Act of 1924 prohibited their wives from joining them.[56]

The result of these discriminatory employment laws was that Asian Americans worked for years in low-paying jobs—the only occupations open to them—and now have only small savings for their retirement. Many men, especially in the Chinese and Filipino American communities, live alone and have no families to care for them.[57] According to gerontologists Richard Kalish and Sharon Moriwaki, they "must face the varied problems of old age not as they had expected—care and respect in one's family and community—but as strangers in a foreign situation."[58]

Several local studies have documented the existence of numerous problems facing these older people. Pei N. Chen of the Boston College School of Social Work surveyed older Chinese Americans in the Chinatown community of Los Angeles. Chen reported that many of the people he surveyed had only a limited knowledge of the English language and one-third were unable to read and write.[59] Many were unable to use public transportation because they could not understand the signs on the buses and subways, and few of the people knew of available community services for older citizens, including a nutrition program and a senior citizens center. Most did not know that community health clinics and a county hospital were located nearby.[60] Furthermore, although none of the men was employed, almost two-thirds (62 percent) were seeking work because their lifelong jobs—mostly marginal restaurant workers—provided insufficient savings for retirement.[61]

Lack of funds, often coupled with an inadequate knowledge of English, results in inadequate care for

[50] Chin Kim and Bok-Lim C. Kim, "Asian Immigrants in American Law: A Look at the Past and the Challenge Which Remains," *American University Law Review*, vol. 26 (1977), pp. 385-86, and note 76 (hereafter cited as "Asian Immigrants in American Law").
[51] Ibid., p. 390.
[52] Ibid., p. 388.
[53] Ibid., pp. 385-6.
[54] Ibid., p. 383.
[55] New York Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The Forgotten Minority: Asian Americans in New York City* (1977), p. 8.
[56] "Asian Immigrants in American Law," p. 378.
[57] Jerry L. Weaver, "Public Policy Responses to the Health Needs of Pacific/Asian American Families" (paper delivered at Conference on Pacific and Asian American Families and HEW-Related Issues, 1978), p. B-126 (hereafter cited as "Public Policy Responses").
[58] Richard A. Kalish and Sharon Moriwaki, "The World of the Elderly Asian American," *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 29 (1973), p. 205.
[59] Pei N. Chen, "A Study of Chinese-American Elderly Residing in Hotel Rooms," *Social Casework*, vol. 60 (February 1979), pp. 91-92.
[60] Ibid., p. 94.
[61] Ibid., p. 91.

these older Asian Americans. Jerry L. Weaver, of the American University School of Government and Public Administration, found that these factors "form massive obstacles to obtaining the basic needs of many [older Asian Americans]. . . .The final years for many. . .are a time of despair, pain, and anguish."[62]

Harry Kitano, addressing a conference on the problems of Asian Americans sponsored by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), also described these problems. He stated that nonuse of community services is frequently accepted by agencies as proof that they are well off and do not need aid.[63] Many older Asian Americans, however, do not actively seek aid for several reasons. Kitano again stressed the fact that language problems[64] serve to discourage Asian Americans from seeking help. Agencies are reluctant to serve this community, he said, because they do not understand the problems of these older citizens. The real problem, Kitano argued, is that many programs for older citizens do not serve the needs of the older Asian American communities. The few bilingual, bicultural programs that have been developed, such as Little Tokyo Towers in Los Angeles (a housing project for older Japanese Americans), are fully utilized, he noted.[65]

One way in which service agencies fail to meet the needs of Asian Americans is the lack of bilingual personnel. Many older Asian Americans have little or no knowledge of English and consequently are unable to receive help that is available to English-speaking persons. A report by the New York Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights noted that those Asian Americans who did seek service were discouraged by lack of bilingual personnel. Moreover, informational material and forms were often not translated.[66] The Advisory Committee concluded that Asian Americans were "a forgotten minority."[67]

Summary

As the previous chapter demonstrated, Asian Americans as a group are not the successful minority that the prevailing stereotype suggests. Individual cases of success should not imply that the diverse peoples who make up the Asian American communities are uniformly successful. Moreover, despite their relatively high educational attainment, Asian Americans earn far less than majority Americans with comparable education and are reported to have been victims of discriminatory employment practices.

Despite the problems Asian Americans encounter, the success stereotype appears to have led policymakers to ignore those truly in need. The examples discussed in this chapter have been cited by spokespersons for the Asian American communities as typical of the lack of concern expressed at the Federal level. On the basis of these examples, there is indeed cause for considerable concern.

[62] "Public Policy Responses," p. B-130.
[63] Harry Kitano, "Asian American Families" (paper delivered at Conference on Pacific and Asian American Families and HEW-Related Issues, 1978), p. B-109.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., p. B-110.
[66] New York Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The Forgotten Minority: Asian Americans in New York City* (1977), p. 19.
[67] Ibid., p. 1.

Appendix A

TABLES A.1 to A.4—

Occupational category of employed persons and median annual income related to years of schooling by ethnic group

TABLE A.1

Occupational category of employed persons age 16 and over, by ethnic group, 1970 Males

Occupational Category	Majority	Japanese American	Chinese American	Filipino American
Professional and Technical	14.7%	21.4%	28.9%	18.1%
Managers and Administrators	11.7%	11.7%	11.4%	3.1%
Sales	7.3%	6.0%	4.4%	2.0%
Clerical	7.5%	9.0%	9.4%	9.2%
Craftsmen and Foremen	21.9%	19.7%	7.3%	13.1%
Operatives	18.9%	10.3%	10.5%	14.3%
Laborers	6.0%	9.9%	3.3%	8.0%
Farmers (including Managers and Laborers)	4.4%	5.2%	0.7%	11.7%
Service Workers	7.3%	5.3%	23.6%	19.9%
Private Household Workers	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%
TOTAL	99.8%	98.7%	99.9%	99.7%

Occupational category of employed persons age 16 and over, by ethnic group, 1970 Females

Occupational Category	Majority	Japanese American	Chinese American	Filipino American
Professional and Technical	15.9%	15.9%	19.4%	31.8%
Managers and Administrators	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%	1.7%
Sales	8.1%	6.9%	5.1%	3.7%
Clerical	36.4%	34.3%	31.8%	29.1%
Craftsmen and Foremen	1.9%	1.8%	1.2%	1.1%
Operatives	14.7%	13.4%	22.5%	10.8%
Laborers	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%
Farmers (including Managers and Laborers)	0.7%	2.1%	0.6%	1.8%
Service Workers	15.4%	17.0%	12.8%	17.0%
Private Household Workers	2.0%	3.8%	1.9%	2.2%
TOTAL	99.9%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%

Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Subject Reports: Japanese, Chinese and Filipinos in the United States*, PC(2) 1-G, tables 7, 22 and 37; and *U.S. Summary*, table 224.

TABLE A.2

Median annual income of persons 25-59 years old with at least fours of college, by ethnic group and area of residence, 1970

MALES	MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME				
Area of Residence	**Majority***	**Japanese American**	**Chinese American**	**Filipino American**	**Hawaiian**
Chicago	$14,408	$10,500	$9,500	$6,250	—**
Los Angeles	$14,311	$12,889	$11,000	$6,875	—**
New York	$14,724	$11,625	$10,437	$8,000	—**
San Francisco	$13,081	$12,111	$11,167	$8,000	—**
Honolulu	$11,500	$12,100	$14,000	$7,500	$13,000
FEMALES					
Chicago	$6,788	$7,500	$6,000	$6,300	—**
Los Angeles	$7,148	$7,357	$5,500	$6,250	—**
New York	$7,820	$9,000	$7,375	$7,429	—**
San Francisco	$6,902	$6,000	$6,300	$5,167	—**
Honolulu	$5,750	$8,250	$4,750	$6,000	$5,500

*Includes white, non-Hispanic.
**Data not available.

Source: Amado Y. Cabezas, "Civil Rights Issues of Asian and Pacific Americans: Myths and Realities," paper presented at consultation sponsored by U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979, table 3A.

TABLE A.3

Median annual income of persons 25-59 years old with high school to three years college education, by ethnic group and area of residence, 1970

MALES	MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME				
Area of Residence	**Majority***	**Japanese American**	**Chinese American**	**Filipino American**	**Hawaiian**
Chicago	$10,904	$9,333	$6,500	$7,250	—**
Los Angeles	$8,875	$9,818	$7,833	$7,611	—**
New York	$10,465	$6,500	$6,571	$8,500	—**
San Francisco	$10,449	$9,500	$8,881	$6,705	—**
Honolulu	$8,875	$9,700	$10,778	$6,000	$8,833
FEMALES					
Chicago	$4,646	$5,250	$5,500	$8,500	—**
Los Angeles	$5,167	$5,196	$4,333	$4,250	—**
New York	$5,128	$6,250	$4,400	$6,500	—**
San Francisco	$5,388	$4,937	$6,079	$4,722	—**
Honolulu	$4,750	$5,524	$5,792	$4,833	$5,200

*Includes white, non-Hispanic.
**Data not available.

Source: Amado Y. Cabeza, "Civil Rights Issues of Asian and Pacific Americans: Myths and Realities," paper presented at consultation sponsored by U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979, table 3A.

Table A.4

Median annual income of persons 25-59 years old with less than high school education, by ethnic group and area of residence, 1970

MALES	MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME				
Area of Residence	**Majority***	**Japanese American**	**Chinese American**	**Filipino American**	**Hawaiian**
Chicago	$9,329	$9,500	$6,000	$8,000	—**
Los Angeles	$8,766	$7,458	$5,000	$4,800	—**
New York	$8,640	$4,750	$4,803	$6,500	—**
San Francisco	$9,047	$8,250	$5,542	$7,000	—**
Honolulu	$9,000	$8,722	$9,250	$7,000	$7,929
FEMALES					
Chicago	$4,250	$4,000	$3,375	$5,500	—**
Los Angeles	$3,834	$3,167	$2,944	$4,125	—**
New York	$3,819	$4,000	$3,588	$6,250	—**
San Francisco	$4,056	$4,250	$2,950	$3,417	—**
Honolulu	$4,000	$4,077	$4,273	$3,500	$3,437

*Includes white, non-Hispanic.
**Data not available.

Source: Amado Y. Cabezas, "Civil Rights Issues of Asian and Pacific Americans: Myths and Realities," paper presented at consultation sponsored by U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979, table 3A.

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